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The Symbolism of the Fetzer Institute Administration Building (May 2, 2013, revised June 3, 2013)¹

The first thing a visitor to the Fetzer Institute notices as he or she walks up to the Administration Building is ... the unusual shapes, which create a subtle but powerful ambience of something futuristic (even ... Atlantean?), while at the same time ancient, and sacred—and Egyptian.

John Fetzer implemented these features deliberately and intentionally, since John personally supervised the design of the building. A lot of money, time, and focus were put into these features by John. So it is clear, by going to this trouble, he was sending a “message” to those of us walking the halls of Fetzer in the future ... and, as we’ll see, maybe John intended even more than just a message. So ... What were these shapes and symbols intended to represent by John? And why did he have them prominently featured in the environment of the Institute?

The fact of the matter is that, while John Fetzer’s public life was one of tremendous business success, in John’s core—motivating, powering, and guiding him—was his profound dedication to esoteric (inner-oriented, inner-sourced, inner-directed) spirituality. And the symbolism of the Administration Building metaphorically broadcasts the story of this interest, for all of us who are part of “Fetzer Inc.” to see, as we take “a spiritual tour through the Administration Building.”

First off, a short initial detour into John’s lifelong spiritual journey will give us background necessary to understand these symbols.

John’s Life: Manifesting the Spiritual in the Physical

John’s lifelong spiritual dedication had its organic roots in at least two profound spiritual experiences that he had in his youth: The “elevator experience” where as a nine-year-old he was taken out of his body and up into the cosmos by Jesus Christ; and “the swine flu” experience where the 17-year-old John was left for dead from the flu, but he survived and dedicated his life to God’s service. We have all heard about these experiences by now; but, as John said to me (Tom Beaver) in his final years, these were defining early influences on his whole life. These episodes gave a young John Fetzer the unique gift of direct spiritual experience, and the spiritual world was forever after more to John than merely an afterlife-place, where rewards would be given in return for a life properly lived. The spiritual world was an actual reality for John, not an article of faith. Anyone who has had a similar experience understands the impact it makes upon his or her life.

What was this impact? To answer this question I can only speak, again, from my own experience: John’s life became an insatiable quest for more—for more of that spiritual experience.

¹ Note that there were a few documents that went to board and staff in 1987, on the symbolism of the Institute Administration Building; but the communication was cautious and sketchy. I make use of some of it here and there below, but this memo takes a deeper or more esoteric approach to the subject, based primarily upon my many discussions with John Fetzer and Jim Gordon. As always, this memo and the entire set of memos is confidential for the Trustees; any possible further distribution is for the Trustees to decide.

That is, he became a lifelong “seeker.” And, in addition, John’s life took on, in his mind, a spiritual meaning: His life became a mission to play his conscious part in “God’s Plan” for the world.

John, as we know, did spend the rest of his life seeking—searching for the means to attain more direct experience of the spiritual world, and also searching for that “spiritual mission” that would be uniquely his to fulfill.

As John went on his spiritual quest, he left the orthodox religious path, “. . . feeling,” John said in his December 3, 1982 interview with Kaye Averitt and Tom Thinnies, “that there had to be another outlook ... I felt that wasn’t the path I wanted to be on—there had to be another path.” And, as seekers sometimes do, John found that there are schools which purport to teach the knowledge as he was seeking—the knowledge of how to re-experience the spiritual world in this very lifetime. The ancient Greeks had a word for such spiritual knowledge: Gnosis. Wikipedia says regarding Gnosis that “it signifies a ‘spiritual knowledge’ ... in the sense of mystical enlightenment.”² Gnosis is transcendent, it is direct, experiential, spiritual knowledge, it is “mystical knowing,” rather than from rational or reasoned thinking.

Some of the “schools of spiritual knowledge” have been in existence for centuries—prominent among them, in the Western world, are the Freemasons and the Rosicrucians.

In John’s case, when he was 33-years-old, he became a Mason, eventually working his way through its many “degrees,” including two “Rosicrucian degrees” (that is, pertaining to deeper hermeticism), and after 35 years, he attained the very top of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, the rare level of 33rd-degree Mason.

What did John learn from his years as a practicing Freemason? Masons discover that there are secret but universal methods, which are presented to them for spiritual training and awakening. Among these methods are the use of ancient mystical symbols; the use of ritual; the use of crystals; and the use of meditation. John made use of each of these practices in his life—and, as we’ll see, he imbued their use into the Fetzer Institute Administration Building as well. For, prominently used by John in his designing and building of the Fetzer Institute, is an abundance of ancient spiritual symbols.

Spiritual symbols, it is taught in schools of hermeticism such as the Freemasons, act as “catalysts” of spiritual experience in a number of different ways:

- Universal spiritual symbols serve to remind the subconscious mind of the existence of a spiritual world, even, according to mystical philosophy, if the conscious mind takes no particular note of the symbol, symbols cause remembrance of the spiritual.
- Universal spiritual symbols also calm the mind, making it receptive it in a spiritual direction, and again, this effect is somewhat automatic, even if the conscious mind takes no note of it.
- Some spiritual symbols serve as icons for spiritual beings and powers, approximating the actual “look” of the being as seen in the “inner spiritual worlds,” and also carrying the “energy” of the being into the physical world. The symbol that Jim Gordon first delivered to John Fetzer in 1981 was presented as just such an icon of the Archangel Michael. In Larry Massie’s June 2011 interview with

² Wikipedia: Gnosis.

Jim Gordon, Jim said: “When I was young, when I was 17 and 18 years old, the Archangel Michael ... used to come in and give me information about different things to do ... whenever he would come in, there would always be this emblem or symbol before he came in. And so I had drawn that out just because I liked it. And so I put that on the top of my AMPRA papers. And so when John saw that, he immediately recognized it from something he had seen in dreams.”

- The Freemasons and Rosicrucians also harken back to particular ancient mystical teachings, whose symbols are used as “object lessons” in their spiritual teachings ... the Rosicrucian tradition traces its foundation to the ancient Egyptians, with their mystical temples and teachings of the afterlife ... and the Freemasons harken back to Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem, their traditional seat of Hebrew (via Egypt) mystical wisdom and also the original home of the Knights Templar—12th-century monk-warriors who, their tradition holds, rediscovered and guarded these forgotten mystic secrets in the ruins of Solomon’s temple. In Masonic tradition the Red Cross of the Knight’s Templar was worn over the heart on the inside of a special cloak in Knights Templar (York Masonic Rites) rituals. John Fetzer possessed and wore his Knights Templar cloak as he participated in these rituals as part of his Masonic experience, and John carefully saved and preserved his cloak, which lies in the Fetzer archives today, as well as the ceremonial Knights Templar hat which is on display at the Institute.



Fetzer’s Knights Templar cloak

And so, when John built his Fetzer Institute Administration Building, he had it imbued with symbolic spiritual training devices. Much as a Christian cathedral or church is designed to induce a certain spiritual receptivity, so too did John, in partnership with his spiritual advisor Jim Gordon, design the Fetzer Institute Administration Building to induce in the Institute’s employees and visitors alike, spiritual receptivity, inspiration, and, John hoped ... even spiritual experience.

We who spend a lot of time in the Administration Building tend to become blasé about the myriad mystical symbols that surround us when we are there, busy as we are with our everyday tasks. But they were a preeminent consideration in the building for John, and so they are a significant part of the history of the Institute—signifying John’s motivations, hopes and dreams for its future. Therefore, this memo takes us on a stroll through the “symbolic” Fetzer Administration Building. We’ll take our stroll, observe the symbols, and then ask the question: Does this matter today?

A Walk Through the Fetzer Administration Building

The first thing one notices when approaching the Fetzer Institute is the shape of the Administration Building—it's a triangle!



John once told me (Tom Beaver) that he'd have loved to have had the building built as a pyramid, but worldly considerations of building complication and expense made this impractical—and John was innately practical! So John had the building made into the next best thing in his mind: a triangle, which is the shape of each of the sides of a pyramid (more on the symbol of the triangle later). Pyramids are prominent in the spiritual traditions of the Egyptians, the Mayans, of Hindu-India, and of many other cultures³ as a symbol of transformation from the “four-square solid physical world” up into the heavens to the spiritual. And in fact, John Fetzer (and his wife Rhea) had traveled to Egypt, to India, to Central America—and visited the pyramids in each of these places. And in the late 1970s John had also made visits to the pyramid at the home of Mary and Dean Hardy in Allegan, Michigan—and he meditated inside of it.

In Jim Gordon's June 20, 2011, interview with Larry Massie, Jim said, “The Institute is built based on the pyramids of Giza. I went and took photographs of the pyramids for him and, you know, wrote down the materials. He wanted to know the materials that were in each of the pyramids. So I got entry into the first two, and then the Great Pyramid ... we used materials and colors (specifically, grey, black and red granite) similar to those for the building of the Institute.”

A pyramid, as a symbol of “four-square matter” rising up into Spirit, is a prominent symbol in Masonry and Rosicrucianism. And in those traditions, a pyramid is said to actually raise lower energy or consciousness into a higher aspect. And of course, John did have an actual pyramidal symbol placed just outside the building: the large obelisk in the parking lot that serves as the HVAC cooling tower.

³ Wikipedia: pyramid



Next, as we walk into the front door of the Fetzer Administration Building ... over the entry is ... a winged solar disk.



Fetzer saw this symbol in 1959 on the temple in Luxor, Egypt built by Ramses II. In a 1987 interview he said, “I remember so well when I was in Luxor looking at this great archway and seeing the spread of the wings;”—and in 1985 he ordered it placed over the entrance of his Administration Building. The winged solar disk is prominent in the spiritual traditions of ancient Egypt (as the symbol of Horus, the “son” of Isis and Osiris, as well as in Zoroastrianism, and the ancient Hebrew Bible also

refers to the “Sun of righteousness aris[ing] with healing in his wings” (Malachi 4:2).⁴ The Masons and Rosicrucians make prominent use of the Egyptian version of this symbol as well.



Winged solar disk over the entrance to the Masonic Temple in Adelaide, Australia

The Masonic/Rosicrucian meaning of the symbol is of the soul who has mastered the mystical secret of leaving the confines of the physical body (using the dual upward-and- downward spiritual currents known in Hinduism as the “ida and pingala,”⁵ symbolized by the two serpents on either side of the central disk), and soars freely up and into the spiritual worlds ... The symbol is thus reminiscent of the spiritual experience that John had as a young boy, and then spent his life in pursuit of again. For John to have this symbol carved over the main entrance of his building establishes this spiritual-physical “interface” as a primary John Fetzer intention for “Fetzer Inc.”

On entering the front door on the building, we first come to the stunning art piece known at Fetzer as “The Hologram.”



An artwork commissioned by John from the mystically-inspired artist, University of Texas Professor Vincent Mariani, the piece soars to the heavens like the spire of a medieval cathedral. However, spiritual inspiration was not John’s only intention for the piece. If the Hologram seems reminiscent of a radio antenna—that’s because, in a way, it was intended to operate as such by pioneering-radio-engineer John Fetzer. However, this one is not to be just any radio antenna. With

⁴ link: [Horus_of_Behutet](#); [Zoroastrianism](#) Wikipedia link.

⁵ Wikipedia: [Pingala_and_Sushumna](#)

crystals and rocks from various interstellar bodies planted in its base as “receptors,” and containing what at the time was the largest single piece of holographic film in the world as a “transmitter,” the piece was designed to be no less than a spiritual antenna and transmitter—an instrument for conducting sacred spiritual energy into the building and transmitting it to all who enter and work here.

Vincent Mariani said, in his June 19, 2011 interview with Larry Massie, “John said to me, ‘Vincent, this instrument as a symbol, and as an instrument, is the capstone of my life’s work.’” Massie asked, “Was this to be kind of like an antenna?” Mariani answered, “That word [antenna] is correct. And it was like a lightning rod. My hope was to build ... an instrument that would pull ... in the current. And I said to John, ‘I want this instrument to be a manifestation of many of your ideas.’ So we worked with sacred geometry. We worked with ... very sacred ideas.”

At the Hologram dedication ceremony on November 30, 1990, which was the very last time he was to be at the Institute, John affirmed the esoteric purpose of this instrument to the assembled Fetzer staff: “The hologram is receiving from the consciousness of the high order of Melchizedek (in certain Western metaphysical traditions, the ancient source of the Abrahamic, Persian, and even Northern Indian spiritual traditions), a form of energy that the planet hasn’t seen in many a decade. This form of energy is at your disposal. It will lift you up and give you an exposure to the very, very highest order of deity. Your intuitive powers will be improved, and you will be able to achieve all of those things of life that you wanted to get out of this time around ...”.

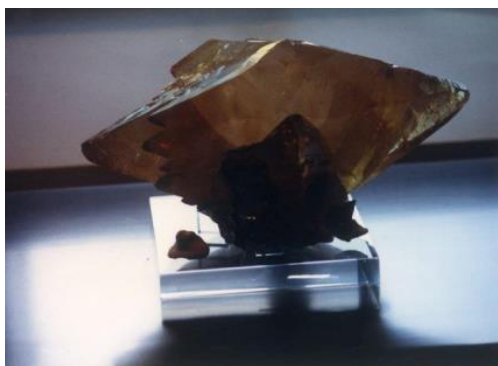
In Jim Gordon’s June 20, 2011 interview with Larry Massie, Jim said, “When Vincent built the sculpture, in the bottom he put a bunch of crystals in the base in a large hole to create a charged field in that. And so that’s there, I know.... [in fact that] there is a very large [number] of crystals in the Fetzer Institute building.”

Which brings us to the matter of ... crystals.

In a February 1984 interview, John said to Kaye Averitt and Tom Thinner, “You put a crystal in your hand and your aura increases about ten-fold.”

In his June 13, 1984 interview with Kaye Averitt, Jim Gordon said about his original vision for the Fetzer Administration Building: “I could see a building somehow in the shape of a crystal, or serving like a collector of energy like a crystal would serve.”

And thus the interior space of the Fetzer Administration Building is adorned with numerous large, beautiful, and mystical pieces of natural crystals of all different kinds, which Jim Gordon traveled to collect and bring back for John.



John's interest in crystals had gone back many years. In an outer, exoteric sense, crystals were the radio-wave transmitters for the early "crystal radio" sets that John experimented with as a young man; these crystals changed radio waves into electrical current, and back again. However, in spiritual tradition, crystals are more than this—they act as transformers, focusers and "steppers-down," of high spiritual energy to a "lower frequency" for the physical plane; whereupon it spiritually "opens" all those in close proximity to the crystals. The famous 20th-century mystic Edgar Cayce recommended the use of crystals for spiritual healing.⁶ And in Native American traditions stone crystals have long been considered means for channeling the Cosmic Force.

John Fetzer was a "true believer" in this use of crystals—finding, for one thing, that his well-known dowsing talents were enhanced when he was holding a crystal. And on June 20, 1984, on the summer solstice, the clairvoyant Joey Jochmans held a ceremony on the 9292 W. KL Avenue property, attended by John and others, to place 13 crystals on the property, in order to consecrate it for its future use as home to the Fetzer Institute.



Left to right: Monday Night Group members Frank Henry and Margaret Zolan, John, Mike Gergely, Lloyd Swierenga, Carolyn Dailey, plus Joey Jochmans

Continuing our stroll through the Administration Building, as we walk through the main lobby we come to the area where once stood The Hall of Records. The Hall of Records was a small semi-circular room with a gold-leafed domed ceiling, in which stood eight busts—most all of whom are claimed in Rosicrucian tradition to have been prominent Western Mystics of the past. These particular personages had special meaning to John—for, John told me (and he told certain others as well), these

⁶ link: edgarcayce.org blog.

were persons who he believed he had been in his past lives. Many of these past lives were told to John by Jim Gordon—or at least were “verified” by him—in the early 1980s.

Next, we come to the black waterfall. In 1987 Jim Gordon said only that, “Water is a symbol of Spirit in manifestation.” In addition however, Jim and I discussed how the curved black stone waterfall is a symbol of the “stream of consciousness” of the subconscious mind, open and receptive—with spiritual impressions and intuitions freely coming in. A good example of this notion of the flowing of impressions through the subconscious, which John and I discussed, is the “flowing-waterfall dress” of the hermetic High Priestess tarot card, symbol of the subconscious mind.⁷



Next, we head up to the second floor. Going up any of the staircases, one takes notice of the downward-pointing triangles, the Fetzer Institute Logo, that make up the railings. The triangle is a Masonic symbol, and is also the most prominent of all Rosicrucian symbols,⁸ with the downward triangle representing God bringing forth His Holy Spirit down into mankind and the physical creation. Comprising all of the railings as we go “up” into the Fetzer Administration, the triangles are symbols of God’s spiritual energy coming into the Institute.

⁷ Link: [Paul_Foster_Case_-_Tarot](#). Paul Foster Case, the originator of this Tarot deck, was a prominent Mason who taught the tarot in Masonic lodges in the 1920s through the 1950s.

⁸ Wikipedia: [Ancient_Mystical_Order_Rosae_Crucis](#)



In the early days of the Administration Building, one also encountered these glittering triangles immediately upon entering the building and approaching the waterfall; these were the triangles on the second floor walkway, which were removed to save weight when the pillars were removed from under the walkway.



One additional note on the Fetzer Logo as it is imbedded in the Administration Building: If you take another look at the photo of the building from the air, you may notice not only the equilateral triangle, but also that the sides of the lobby when seen from above are shaped approximately in the shape of a “j” and an “f”—again approximating the Fetzer Logo design. The stylized “j” and “f” in the Fetzer Emblem stand not only for “John Fetzer,” but they also represent the Egyptian Pharaoh’s flail and crook which, like the “rod and staff” of the 23rd Psalm of David, are mystical symbols of the mastery over—that is, the ability to invoke—God’s Holy Spirit, which John intended to flow from the highest Source into the building through the hologram, and from there to be transmitted and focused throughout the building with the aid of the interspersed crystals.



Continuing our building tour, we are now upstairs. The three corners of the upper floor of the building were intended by John to represent mind, body, and Spirit—or, in the Christian tradition, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In the original layout of the building the three corners were the locations for the meditation room, representing Spirit; the library (now the Memorial Trustees room), representing the mind; and the President’s Office, representing the “Son” or the “person” or “body.”

Walking through the second floor hallways, one notices that the ceilings over the hallways are “peaked,” again suggesting the pyramidal effect of the raising of energy.



Moving on into the President's Office, the most prominent feature is the Jefferson inspired large circular window, the top half of which is in this office, and the bottom half of which illuminates the "board room" immediate below. Jim Gordon said in 1987 that the intention was to incorporate "Jeffersonian energy" (see the Hall of Records memo) into the building, both here and in the serpentine wall that leads to the front door of the building.



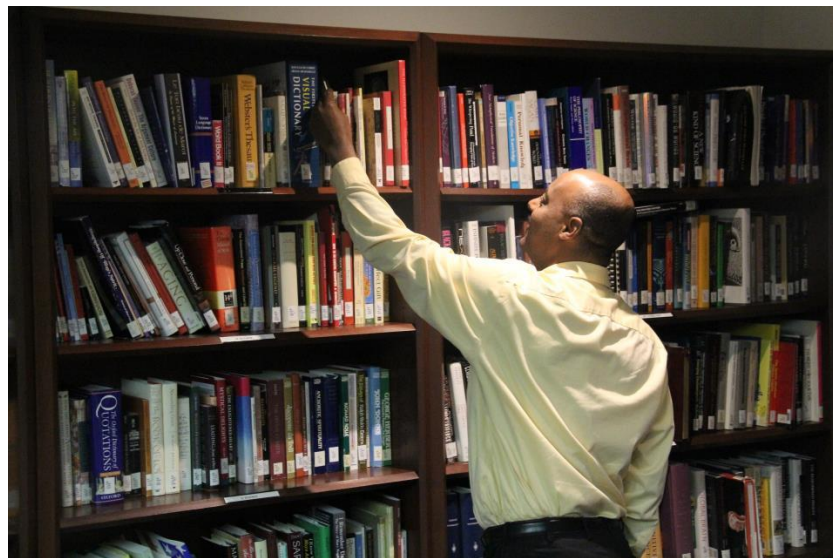
Continuing on, wandering now into one of the many offices on the upper floor, one takes notice of the unusual layout of the windows in each.



The corner of the Memorial Trustees office/meeting room

In order to “really see” out the narrow lower windows one has to be sitting, or kneeling, not standing—this was meant by John to symbolically remind those working in the offices of the humility necessary to be receptive to Spirit. And then, especially when one is sitting down, one notices that the upper windows take the gaze upward—symbolic of looking upward to the Divine for inspiration and guidance.

Coming back downstairs again, we take note of the libraries, both on the main floor and in the basement. These libraries are interspersed with books that John owned, read, and studied—books from the apocryphal Gnostic Biblical texts, to the texts of Theosophy, to the *A Course in Miracles*, to books on pyramids, to channeled New Age materials, to MSIA books, books on meditation, and so on.



The main floor library

And here’s a snapshot of just a few of John’s many, many books in the archives.



Finally, exiting out the back employees' entrance of the building, one finds two Egyptian Angels.



These are designed to replicate the carvings on the panels of the multi-layered, gold-leafed shrine protecting the sarcophagus of the Pharaoh Tutankhamen. The angels are actually the ancient Egyptian Goddesses Isis and her twin sister Nephthys, which are of important mystical-tradition significance. The winged goddess Isis⁹ may be the oldest deity in Egypt, and she may also be the most important. In ancient Egyptian tradition, after Osiris, Isis' husband and the Lord of the gods, had been murdered, it was Isis who, by using the proper magic words, intonations and rituals, with her wings "blew" life back into Osiris, resurrecting him. Isis and Osiris then became the father of Horus, "the son," who is symbolized by the winged disk over the front entrance of the building. Isis also, using more of her magic, tricked the sun god Ra to reveal his secret Name. Isis could transform herself into the kite bird at will and fly into the heavens. She brought the "heavenly scent" with her throughout the land, leaving lingering scents of spices and flowers her wake. Her heavenly symbol was the star Sirius. In ancient Egypt, Isis was revered as the Great Goddess, the great protector, and she was prayed to for guidance, and beseeched for peace in the world. Along with the god Thoth, Isis taught man the secrets of magic, medicine, and agriculture.

The other goddess at the employees' entrance is Nephthys, the twin sister of Isis.¹⁰ She also could use the wings of the kite-like Isis. The two sisters were often together, and, like her sister, Nephthys was thought to have great magical powers—she was the Mighty One of Words of Power. Yet she was "the darkness" to Isis' "Light." Isis was the day, her twin sister the night. Nephthys thus became associated with the dead, becoming a friend of the deceased. She offered guidance to the newly dead, and comfort to the family of the one who died. She was called the Lady of Heaven. Thus, the Institute back door's "angels of protection" are symbolic of the spiritual energy, mastery of which,

⁹ Wikipedia: Isis.

¹⁰ Wikipedia: Nephthys.

John hoped and believed, was available to all Fetzer employees who daily enter and exit through that door.

Thus were John's use of mystical symbols in the building ... they are easy to miss, and yet they are so overt and out in the open! To John Fetzer they were more than "remembrances"—to him they turned the building into an "instrument of Spirit." And John was confident that only those who were in subconscious harmony with such deep mystical symbols would come to work in the building.

As John said, during a channeling session by Jim Gordon in 1984, "I thank you, dear ones, for raising up [the Fetzer "Core Management Group" who were participating in this channeling] and all the others that are to come. I know that there are many more that are being prepared and will be ready when the need is there."

Do the Administration Building Symbols Matter Today?

Today, more than two decades after John Fetzer's passing, the question can be asked whether the "symbolic setup" of the Fetzer Administration really matters? Is the Hologram really an "Instrument," a spiritual radio antenna? And is the whole building really acting similar to a gigantic crystal, focusing and amplifying ancient spiritual energy into the building, to guide and inspire all those who work there? Or are these things merely the artifacts of the personal side of the John Fetzer journey, and not an important part of his lasting legacy?

In my opinion, what really matters to us who were asked to guide "JEF Inc.," today and on into the future, is what these symbols say about John's intention for the whole Fetzer Enterprise. To me, John meant for his legacy to be one of helping to bring spiritual awakening to ourselves and to the world. And John went to great trouble to emphasize this—so much so that he went to the great effort to build his physical monument, the Administration Building, as an overt symbol of asking for, and listening to, inner guidance from Spirit. John staked everything on making this point to those in charge of his future legacy—to him, it was everything he stood for; it was ... everything.

The fact is, however, that the physical symbols never have the exact power or significance that "true believers" wish they had. The "instruments" do not "open up" communication to the astral plane in the overt way early 20th-century Western esotericists hoped.

However, in my opinion it is the deeper message that is more important to us at "Fetzer Inc.": That spiritual awakening based upon inner connection is our spiritual legacy. And John boldly declared this to be his truth, both in his words and in the symbolic setup of his building.

And I believe we, as trustees, owe it to John to remember and to honor this.